

Minutes of the
Eighty-Ninth Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
January 14, 2021

The eighty-ninth meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) was convened on January 14, 2021 via web conference call. The public was notified about the meeting and had the opportunity to listen via phone or web.

Authority Members/Designees Present:

Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority; Pete Leshner (MD Association of Counties representative); Burton Kummerow (President of the Senate representative); Marty Baker (representing MD Department of Transportation Secretary Gregory Slater); Marci Ross, standing in for Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (representing MD Department of Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz); Nita Settina (representing MD Department of Natural Resources Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio); Wayne E. Clark (President of the Senate representative); Daniel Spedden (MD Tourism Development Board representative); Bruce Lesh (representing MD State Department of Education Secretary Karen Salmon); Amy Seitz¹ (representing MD Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Kenneth C. Holt); Elizabeth Hughes (State Historic Preservation Officer); Janice Hayes-Williams (representing Speaker of the House); Robert D. Campbell² (Governor's Appointee for Historic Preservation and serving as Vice Chair for the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority); John Kinnaird (MD Municipal League representative);

Authority Members/Designees Absent:

Lee Towers (representing MD Higher Education Commission Secretary James D. Fielder, Jr.); Rowland Agbede (representing MD Department of Agriculture Secretary Joseph Bartenfelder); Natalie Chabot (Representative for MD Greenways); Vacant (Governor's Appointee for Heritage Tourism); Vacant (representing Speaker of the House)

Staff Present: Jennifer Ruffner, Ennis Barbery Smith, Andrew Arvizu (Maryland Historical Trust); Paul Cucuzzella, Rieyn DeLony (Office of the Attorney General)

Heritage Area Directors/Staff Present: Lucille Walker (Southern Maryland Heritage Area & Co-Chair, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas); Sarah Rogers (Montgomery County Heritage Area & Co-Chair, Maryland Coalition of Heritage Areas); Deidra Ritchie (Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area); Elizabeth Shatto (Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area); Julie Gilberto-Brady (Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area); Carol Benson (Four Rivers / Annapolis, London Town and South County Heritage Area); Gail Owings (Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area); Aaron Marcavitch, Kirstin Falk, and Grace Davenport (Maryland Milestones / Anacostia Trails Heritage Area); Brigitte Carty (Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway); Aaron Shapiro (Patapsco Valley Heritage Area); Lisa Challenger (Beach to Bay Heritage Area); Shauntee Daniels (Baltimore National Heritage Area); Kim Folk (Mountain

¹ Ms. Seitz attended a portion of the meeting.

² Mr. Campbell attended a portion of the meeting.

Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area)

Others Present: La Fabian Marshall (City of Pocomoke); Frank Hawk (Spirit of Newtown Committee)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Robert S. McCord, Secretary, MD Department of Planning and Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

Mr. McCord wished everyone a happy new year, noted the start of the legislative session and redistricting efforts, and emphasized the importance of Maryland's heritage in moving the state forward.

INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. McCord asked Ms. Jen Ruffner to conduct an attendance roll call. Ms. Ruffner conducted the roll call, determining that – with three MHAA members absent, fourteen present, and two vacant seats – there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM October 8, 2020 MEETING

Resolution R-100 to Approve Minutes from October 8, 2020 Meeting

Mr. McCord called for a motion to approve the October 8, 2020 MHAA meeting minutes.

Mr. Pete Leshner offered the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves the October 8, 2020 meeting minutes as presented (R-100).

The motion was seconded by Dr. Marty Baker and approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Ratification of Executive Committee Decision from November 2020

Resolution R-200 to Ratify the November 16, 2020 Action Taken by the Executive Committee to approve a FY 2021 emergency grant for the George Washington Headquarters Cabin Project

Ms. Ruffner reviewed the MHAA Emergency Grant request from the City of Cumberland, noting that it was taken up by the Executive Committee because of the situation's urgency. She said the request for \$5,000 for emergency repairs – including roof, wall, fireplace, window and porch repairs – to the George Washington's Headquarters Cabin was approved unanimously via email by the MHAA Executive Committee on November 16, 2020.

Mr. Burton Kummerow made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority ratifies the action taken by the Executive Committee via email vote on November 16, 2020 to award a FY 2021 emergency grant in the amount of \$5,000 to the City of Cumberland for emergency repairs including roof, walls, fireplace, windows and porch to the George Washington's Headquarters Cabin, 40 Greene Street, Cumberland, MD.

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

MANAGEMENT REPORT (Jennifer Ruffner, MHAA Administrator)

MHAA Financing Fund Report

Ms. Ruffner reported that, as of December 30, 2020 the current available balance in the MHAA Financing Fund was \$179,695.11. Subtracting the amount reserved for operating (\$124,443.32) and the remaining FY 21 Emergency Grant Funds (\$25,000) that leaves a balance of \$30,251.79.

Ms. Ruffner reported that since the last meeting, two grants totaling \$125,000 had been returned and one grant was closed out under budget, returning \$259.76 in unused funds.

Reserve List Funding Update

Ms. Ruffner said that the returned funding had been reallocated to Reserve List projects, as per the Reserve List Policy: \$100,000 to the City of Mount Rainier for "Rhode Island Avenue Revitalization"; \$20,000 to the Town of Bladensburg for "Bostwick Use Feasibility & Market Analysis"; and \$5,000 to the Mount Vernon Conservancy for "Website Upgrade."

FY 2021 Grant Processing Update (Ennis Smith)

Ms. Smith reported the following status update for FY 2021 MHAA grants: 73 have been fully processed; 33 have been emailed to grantees for digital signature; 1 is undergoing legal review; 2 are being processed by MHT staff; and 6 are still in the verification of details stage. The verification of details stage means that MHAA staff members are waiting to hear back from the grantees regarding the details of their projects.

Ms. Smith thanked MHT grants management staff and Office of the Attorney General (OAG) staff for their help with processing the grants.

Mr. Wayne Clark complimented MHAA, MHT, and OAG staff for efficiently processing the FY 2021 MHAA grants.

FY 2022 Grant Round – Roll-out and Webinars (Ennis Smith)

Ms. Smith reported that MHAA staff have livestreamed two webinars for grant applicants, and recordings of both are now available for viewing online. 29 tuned into the first webinar in December, while over 20 tuned in to the one held in early January. Since it was posted in December, the first webinar has been clicked 71 times after it was originally streamed.

MHAA staff have also been holding a series of virtual “office hours” sessions, which Ms. Smith explained are intended to provide an opportunity for grant applicants to talk directly with MHAA staff, get feedback on their project ideas, and ask questions. MHT Easements and Compliance staff also agreed to attend two of these sessions and provide feedback specific to MHAA Capital projects. At the first of the office hours sessions, held on January 13, two potential applicants attended.

Report on Conversions of Project Grants to COVID-19 Emergency Grant Funding (Andrew Arvizu)

Mr. Andrew Arvizu said that MHAA has been happy to be able to help its grantees during this time of unprecedented economic challenges due to COVID-19 by allowing FY 21 grantees to convert up to \$20,000 of their grant awards to cover basic operations and allowing grantees who received funds in previous fiscal years to convert their remaining balances, if applicable.

Mr. Arvizu shared that grantees have thanked MHAA for this flexibility and provided the example of Historic Sotterley, a grantee that converted a portion of their funds to cover operating expenses, allowing them to continue operations and to expand their digital programming.

Mr. Arvizu shared the following numbers: 59 grants (\$600,440) awarded to in a special emergency grant round for operations; portions of 12 FY 2020 grants (\$229,413) converted to cover basic operations; portions of 10 FY 2021 grants (\$188,600) converted to cover basic operations. This funding for operations totals \$1,018,453 in COVID-19 assistance for MHAA partners.

Mr. McCord thanked MHAA members and MHAA staff for their dedication in providing assistance to grantees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Clark asked if MHAA will be providing operating assistance to grantees in FY 2022, as many organizations continue to struggle financially in the ongoing pandemic.

Ms. Ruffner said that MHAA indeed may want to consider taking similar measures in FY 2022 and that this is a good segue to the next section of the management report.

Potential additional COVID-19 Relief Survey and Recommendations

Ms. Ruffner reported that MHAA and MHT staff are planning to conduct another survey of heritage partners across the state to ask about how these partners have been affected by the pandemic and how MHAA and MHT might be able to assist them as they recover from setbacks associated with COVID-19.

She said that MHT would also like to hold some virtual listening sessions. Staff will gauge interest in the listening sessions as part of the survey.

Using the information gathered in the surveys and the listening session, MHAA staff will report back to MHAA at the April quarterly meeting and make recommendations about what actions might be taken to support heritage partners. At this point, MHAA staff will also have a better sense of how much demand there is for the regular MHAA project grants compared with previous years.

Ms. Ruffner asked MHAA members to send her their ideas for what should be included in the surveys and covered at the listening sessions.

Ms. Hughes asked about funding opportunities offered by of the Maryland Department of Commerce and whether MHAA members should be helping to spread the word about those programs.

Ms. Marci Ross said that while the Office of Tourism Development in the Department of Commerce does not typically offer funding for operations, there is a webinar being offered today that was circulated by the Arts Council. The webinar, hosted by the Small Business Administration, will give a preliminary overview of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program, a federal program. It is being recorded.

Dr. Baker noted that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development offered grant assistance to non-profits as part of the Maryland Nonprofit Recovery Initiative.

Mr. Clark asked if the Grant Guidelines for FY 2022 had been finalized, noting that it might be useful to let applicants know at the time of application whether funds for operating might become available.

Ms. Ruffner said that the Grant Guidelines for FY 2022 have already been finalized and circulated to potential applicants. She noted that this was the case last year and that applicants were offered the flexibility to convert portions of their grants to operating later in the process, after the grants had been awarded. She said grantees provided positive feedback about this policy decision last year.

Marketing Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that the Marketing Working Group convened for the first time in early December, that there were many different elements and questions that came up in the course of

the first conversation, and that MHAA staff is pulling together some materials regarding previous marketing grant awards and policies for the group to review at their next meeting.

Racial Equity Working Group Update

Ms. Ruffner reported that the group has met twice so far. The group members have asked for detailed background information about MHAA's existing policies and procedures, which MHAA staff has been pulling together and sharing. She noted that a request for proposals for a facilitator was released this month, and the facilitator with experience in racial equity evaluation and planning will be leading the group as soon as they are on board. The group will continue to meet monthly.

Direct Performance Evaluation and 360 Survey

Ms. Ruffner said that the direct performance evaluations and 360 survey were a part of the recommendations made in the 2010-2020 MHAA strategic plan. She explained that MHAA has not conducted the direct performance evaluations over the past several years in part because several heritage areas had not yet completed their management grants from previous years. Data from the final reports is used in the direct performance evaluations. At the April meeting, MHAA staff will be sharing the direct performance evaluations for FY 2017, FY 2018, and FY 2019.

Ms. Ruffner said that the 360 surveys are to be completed by heritage area staff, MHAA members, heritage area board members, and MHAA staff, and are a way to share feedback about the different elements of the program overall. The results of these surveys will also be covered at the April meeting of MHAA, and the survey link will be shared with members in early February.

Program Impact Study Roll-out

Ms. Ruffner reported that the Program Impact Study and press release are currently under review by the Governor's Office, and that MHAA staff will be working with the local heritage areas to release these items, as well as the heritage areas' individual reports, as soon as the statewide materials are approved.

She shared that the heritage areas program contributes \$2.4 billion in annual economic impact and supports 33,815 jobs annually.

Ms. Ruffner said that the actions MHAA took to provide COVID-19 economic relief to partner organizations are also highlighted in the narrative of the report. She underscored that the report's findings show the importance of helping partner sites to be visitor-ready and safe now and after the pandemic in order sustain this level of economic activity.

Ms. Hughes noted that state budget hearings will be taking place in February and that it is important for the heritage area directors to be able to share the economic contribution numbers with their elected officials as soon as possible.

Mr. McCord agreed and said that he is doing his best to make sure the heritage areas have everything they need well in advance of the budget hearings to make the case for how important the program is. He said that the Governor's Office is also sharing information related to the COVID-19 vaccination rollout and is balancing all the different news that needs to be communicated with citizens across the state.

Mr. Clark thanked Mr. McCord for his leadership on the matter. He said that the economic contribution reports will be very important for people who are less familiar with the program.

MARYLAND COALITION OF HERITAGE AREAS (MCoHA) REPORT (Lucille Walker, Co-Chair, MCoHA)

Ms. Ruffner reported that based on some feedback from the Coalition of Maryland Heritage Areas about having the timeslot at the end of the meeting, the group will be trying a new model for reporting out to MHAA today. Following the Coalition's general report, the individual heritage areas will have 15 minutes to report on local heritage area happenings in the middle of the meeting. They have divided this 15 minute-time-slot today between the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Four Rivers Heritage Area, Southern Maryland Heritage Area, Montgomery County Heritage Area, Patapsco Valley Heritage Area, Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area, and Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area.

Ms. Lucille Walker reported that the Coalition is looking forward to sharing the economic contribution reports with legislators and underscored the importance of doing this as soon as possible. She noted the unprecedented economic context and potential threats to the Program Open Space budget.

Ms. Walker invited Ms. Gail Owings to report on the activities of Maryland Efficient Grant Application (MEGA) Council, to which Ms. Owings has been appointed.

Ms. Owings reported that the meeting announcements, minutes, and other related items can be found at <https://grants.maryland.gov/>. She said that Maryland is a trailblazer in this effort to have a common application and tracking system for all grants in the state, and that only a few other states are working on similar undertakings.

She said that the Federal Uniform Guidance for grants is currently being reviewed at the federal level, and is a key element of the state's efforts.

She shared that the council members are forming working groups and that she has endeavored to get Kristen McMasters, who serves on the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area's board of directors and has expertise on grants, particularly federal grants, appointed to the group that will be reviewing the federal Uniform Guidance and how that would apply in Maryland.

Ms. Owings said she is hoping that the heritage areas grant program will be exempted from any guidance that is more targeted for larger-scale grants. She said that the request for proposals

(RFP) related to grants management software for the proposed statewide system is meant to be the means of implementing the MEGA Council's recommendations.

Ms. Hughes asked if the MEGA Council's members had voiced concerns that the RFP was already circulating, while the Council was just beginning discussions. Ms. Owings said that the RFP generated a few questions but did not seem to cause concern among the Council members.

Ms. Walker thanked Ms. Owings for her report.

Ms. Walker emphasized that, as part of the legislative push that the Coalition is undertaking, they are speaking about how the heritage areas program can be part of the solution for many of the economic problems that the state is facing during the pandemic.

HERITAGE AREA's ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Brigitte Carty of the Lower Susquehanna Heritage showed the group the heritage area's new brochure, noting that one of the heritage area's goals is the creation of a 38-mile trail system that links communities and recreational areas, serving as a catalyst for economic revitalization. As they make progress toward this goal, the heritage area is currently involved in 13 trail-related efforts. Some of the construction has been slowed due to the pandemic, but trail usage has increased. County planners are now creating an updated GIS trail map, which will allow the heritage area to help identify missing links and prioritize future projects. The annual clean-up event, River Sweep, was modified to River Sweep Re-Imagined to allow for a social distanced shoreline clean-up that took place throughout October and included scuba divers picking up debris.

Ms. Lisa Challenger of the Beach to Bay Heritage Area reported that her heritage area has secured a grant from the Rural Maryland Council to produce virtual tours for local museums. She reported that they have created two so far, available on YouTube, and that now other museums are hoping to have one created as well. To that end, the heritage area just applied for an additional grant from a local foundation to create more, and they hope that this effort will help people remember and appreciate the small museum even while they are closed due to COVID.

Dr. Carol Benson of the Four Rivers Heritage Area shared that in her heritage area's recent mini grant round, they invited both project grant application and applications for emergency operating funds. They received 5 requests for project funding and four requests for emergency operating funding. The heritage area was able to award a total of \$27,420 for mini grants. The heritage area's annual Maryland Day event is coming up. It occurs in March, and last year it was initially cancelled but then held as a rebooted event in June, called Maryland Day Un-Paused. This year, Maryland Day will be a hybrid event, with some sites offering virtual experiences, some offering in-person experiences, and some offering both. The new theme is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and new content related to this subject matter that will be shared as part of the events, to be held March 19-21. Dr. Benson also reported that the Four Rivers heritage area has been undertaking a boundary amendment, which they hope will be reviewed at MHAA's April meeting. They are planning a PowerPoint tour of the areas proposed for inclusion, in lieu of the

usual in-person tour. They will be adding recreational trails to the heritage area as part of this amendment.

Ms. Lucille Walker of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area reported that the national heritage area initiative that her heritage area is undertaking is moving forward. The legislation for this was submitted during the last session of the US Congress, and it will be re-presented for consideration in February or March by Senator Cardin and Congressman Hoyer, with support from Senator Van Hollen. The associated feasibility study is also moving forward. Ms. Walker reported that the Maryland Re-Discovery 400 Project is continuing. It is an effort to uncover stories that have not been fully explored in the region. Ms. Walker said that the heritage area received nearly \$100,000 in requests for the Seed Grant program (MHAA mini grants), and they were able to award \$40,000.

Ms. Sarah Rogers of Heritage Montgomery reported that the heritage area has completed their African American driving tour, a self-guided tour through heritage sites that will be posted online next week. She said they are nearing completion of the first of four themed heritage area brochures. The first will be the African American heritage brochure, followed by the transportation, heritage gems, and the Agricultural Reserve brochures.

Dr. Aaron Shapiro of the Patapsco Heritage Greenway reported that the heritage area has just completed a photo, video, and drone project as part of their MHAA marketing grant. The products developed showcase the heritage area's landscapes and watershed well, and the heritage area will be using them across multiple platforms. These materials will also be an important part of the upcoming virtual Patapsco Days in March, for which the heritage area will be sharing video shorts to provide a more inclusive interpretation of the region's history. The shorts will include interview clips from Korean and Spanish language-speakers whose important sites were recently added to the heritage area through a boundary amendment. The heritage area is also planning to hold a workshop about collecting and preserving Patapsco stories, supported by a Maryland Humanities grant, to be held March 27.

Ms. Julie Gilberto-Brady of the Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area shared that her heritage area had just finished producing some new augmented and virtual reality content for Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway. She explained that the original narration is unchanged for the 36 sites on the audio guide, but the heritage area was able to add new experiences for four of those sites. Ms. Gilberto-Brady showed an example from the Bucktown Crossroads, one of the stops that was enhanced with an augmented reality experience on the mobile application. The experiences include 360 views of the sites and what they might have looked like and characters are present in the interactive scenes. The other sites included are the Bayly House, the Stanley Institute, and the Leverton House. Ms. Gilberto-Brady described how the heritage area worked with Maryland State Parks on the project and how some of the same elements included in the documentary shown at the visitor's center are also included in these augmented reality experiences. She noted that this project was funded in part by an MHAA grant.

Ms. Elizabeth Shatto of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area shared that her heritage area hosted a virtual annual meeting on November 12, 2020. The recording has had almost 300 views so far, and she invited everyone to view it at their convenience on YouTube. Ms. Shatto said her heritage area has been busy helping partners navigate relief opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic and – so far – they have helped bring at least \$500,000 in support to non-profits in the heritage area. This is an example of the type of technical assistance that the heritage area provides to partners. She said the heritage area recently completed some destination marketing that they had to postpone in the spring and that this marketing highlighted African American history-focused experiences that could be accessed through socially distanced outdoor recreation. She said the Heart of the Civil War’s GeoTrail is being updated, after being launched about five years ago. Ms. Shatto shared that the Newcomer House, which serves as the heritage area’s visitor center, resumed visitor services in July through November, greeting visitors on the porch only. Nearby trails surged in popularity, and Ms. Shatto expects the Newcomer House may have served even more visitors in this time frame than compared with non-pandemic times. This operation relied on contracted help rather than volunteers, and the heritage area is exploring how to continue this in the spring. Ms. Shatto expressed concern about the \$5,000 minimum request-level for MHAA grants, noting that Capital projects for under \$5,000 cannot apply for mini-grants. She said she often sees partners seeking funds for small capital grants under \$5,000 and that these projects are also often of an emergency-nature. She also shared that the heritage area is working on a boundary amendment in Washington County and MHAA members should expect more details soon about a virtual tour in March.

Ms. Marci Ross asked Ms. Sarah Rogers of the Montgomery County Heritage Area to provide an update about the situation with the Historic White’s Ferry. Ms. Sarah Rogers explained that Historic White’s Ferry ceased operations at the beginning of January. Prior to this, it has served as the last operating ferry on the Potomac and as a vital transportation and tourism link between Loudoun County, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland. Ms. Rogers reported that there have been legal battles about the property on the Virginia side of the Potomac. She said that the property is recently under new ownership, and the new owners are requesting an increased fee from White’s Ferry (based on the Maryland side) in order to allow the ferry to land on their property. Ms. Rogers reported that she believes it will eventually reopen after the negotiations eventually continue and said she would keep MHAA informed of the situation.

Mr. McCord thanked the heritage area directors for their updates.

ACTION ITEMS

Resolution R-300 to Approve a FY 2020 Emergency Grant Request from the City of Pocomoke

Ms. Ruffner reported that the City of Pocomoke has requested an MHAA Emergency Grant for \$17,000 to replace the roof of the Costen House. She said that the Costen House is a circa-1890 house in Pocomoke, in the Beach to Bay Heritage Area. The Maryland Historical Trust holds a preservation easement on the house, and it was the home of the first mayor of Pocomoke. The

non-profit organization Spirit of Newtown Committee operates the house as a historic house museum.

Ms. Ruffner noted that the water damage occurring from the leaks was so urgent that the applicant needed to start work immediately in December, and – as a result – the request is a retroactive request for funds that would cover work starting in the beginning of December of 2020.

Ms. Ruffner showed some photos of the recent damage. She explained for context that MHAA awarded the City of Pocomoke a grant in FY 2021 for previous plaster repairs in the parlor that were needed due to water damage. That damage was attributed to gutter leaks, and the gutters had been sealed prior to requested the FY 21 grant. Pocomoke began the FY 21 plaster repairs, thinking the leaking issue was resolved, but in October when a series of strong rains took place, the Costen House began experiencing severe leaks in multiple parts of the house. Ms. Ruffner noted that the Costen House's insurance company performed an inspection and their assessment was that the damage was not due to a weather event. The insurance company will not be covering any repairs. Around the same time, another inspection of the roof found it was at the end of its lifespan and needed to be replaced immediately.

Ms. Ruffner noted that Frank Hawk of the Spirit of Newtown Committee and La Fabian Marshall of the City of Pocomoke were present on the call and available to help answer questions. She invited Ms. Lisa Challenger, director of the Beach to Bay Heritage Area to provide any input on the request.

Ms. Challenger emphasized that Pocomoke City's downtown has a number of historic site attractions that all work together to provide visitors with a tourism experience and that the Costen House is an integral part of that small grouping of attractions. The businesses in Pocomoke rely on these attractions to bring people into the area.

Ms. Ruffner noted that the MHAA Emergency Grant policy is that emergency funds are only available to projects that were unanticipated at the time of the previous application round and that cannot wait until the next grant round.

There was discussion.

Mr. Clark made the following motion:

RESOLVED, that the Authority approves a FY 2021 emergency grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Financing Fund in an amount not to exceed \$17,000 to the City of Pocomoke for emergency roof work on the Costen House, 206 Market Street, Pocomoke City, with eligible costs allowable beginning December 1, 2020.

Mr. John Kinnaird seconded the motion.

Mr. McCord called for a vote and for any abstentions.

The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Review of Management and Marketing Grants by MHAA

Ms. Ruffner noted that this discussion item was tabled at the last meeting. With the new grants review panel system in place for project grants, which comprise the bulk of the applications, she said that MHAA reviewed MHAA Management Grant applications directly last year. The grants review panel reviewed the MHAA Marketing Grant applications last year, but she reported that it was not a good fit because the comparison between project and marketing grant applications is not one-to-one. This year, MHAA staff is proposing that MHAA members review both the Management and Marketing Grants directly. Discussion was needed to help flesh out a more formalized structure and processes for this review based on what MHAA members are comfortable doing.

Ms. Ruffner estimated that every year, the volume of review will be 13 Management Grant applications and generally 4 to 6 Marketing Grant applications per cycle, judging from previous years.

Ms. Ruffner provided some options for how the review process might look:

- All MHAA Members review all Management and Marketing grant applications
- All MHAA Members review some of the Management and Marketing grant applications and make recommendations to full MHAA
- A sub-committee of MHAA reviews some or all of the Management and Marketing grant applications and makes recommendations to full MHAA
- Establish some type of certification process since these are received annually (per Dan Spedden's suggestion at October meeting)

There was discussion.

After hearing some discussion, Mr. McCord suggested that there seemed to be consensus around the idea of forming subcommittees to review both the Management and Marketing Grant applications. He also said he would like to make sure that any MHAA member who is interested would have the opportunity to view all these grant applications, even when not serving on one of the proposed sub-committees. MHAA members not on the sub-committees who have comments on applications could send those comments to the relevant sub-committee.

There was discussion.

Ms. Ruffner offered to organize the two proposed subcommittees – one to review Management grants and one to review Marketing grants. She asked anyone interested in serving as part of

either group to email her directly. She said the groups would receive materials to review in May and would need to conduct their reviews before the July MHAA meeting.

Mr. McCord said that regardless of the committee or working group set up, he plans to read over each of the Management Grant applications to ensure that he, as MHAA's Chair, has an understanding of what the requests entail. He also recommended that MHAA consider rotating members through the working groups in order to give everyone a chance to see the process of review more closely.

Staff Recommendation – Stipends for Non-State Grants Review Panelists

Ms. Ruffner said that this discussion was also tabled at the last MHAA meeting in October. At this meeting, the MHAA staff provided a memo re-introducing the discussion of honorariums for non-state employees serving on MHAA's Grants Review Panel. MHAA staff initially recommended \$100 honorariums when the panel was established in 2019.

Ms. Ruffner said that after surveying the panelists and hearing that they spent 30-40 hours on reading and scoring applications, apart from review meetings and training sessions, MHAA staff decided to ask MHAA to reconsider the issue.

Ms. Ruffner reviewed several examples of federal grant programs that provide honorariums for grant reviewers. Some honorariums are flat rates while others are based on the number of applications reviewed. She also noted that the discussion of honorariums relates to equity, and that, when the topic came up at the last MHAA Racial Equity Working Group, some of the group members raised concerns about the lack of compensation for grant reviewers.

There was discussion.

There were questions raised about what the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) provides for grant reviewers. Ms. Smith said that the honorariums vary by grant program. She summarized that MSAC generally provides \$200 for digital review, \$100 per review meeting, and \$200 travel stipend, with some notable variations.

There was discussion.

There was consensus that MSAC should be used as a model.

Ms. Ruffner said that MHAA staff would review MSAC's honorarium policies and present an action item at the April MHAA meeting that mirrors MSAC's honorariums for panelists reviewing comparable sets of applications.

Mr. McCord agreed this was a good approach and thanked everyone for the productive discussion.

MHAA MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Marty Baker announced that Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is looking forward to opening another round of Bikeways grants. They are requesting expressions of interest, which may be submitted by email, in order to make sure staff can direct people to the right resources. She thanked the heritage areas and Maryland Department of Planning for their participation in Walktober and said that MDOT would host the event series again in October of 2021. She said the recorded webinars generated over 7,000 clicks to view the content.

Mr. Burt Kummerow announced that Maryland Four Centuries Project will be presenting a Lunch and Learn series on the second Thursday of each month at 1 pm. This series is presented in partnership with the Maryland State Archives and the Baltimore Enoch Pratt Free Library. The series is currently seeking speakers and is especially interested in Maryland history that has relevance in the present. Mr. Kummerow said that the first program in the series will be today (January 14, 2021) at 1 pm and will feature Tim Baker of the Maryland State Archives discussing the role of archives in the debate about public monuments.

Ms. Nita Settina of the Maryland Park Service and Department of Natural Resources reported that Maryland State Parks had over 21 million visitors in 2020, which represents a 46% increase in visitation, driven by the pandemic. She said that parks filled to capacity 292 times in 2020, almost triple the occurrences in a typical year. She also shared that camping and cabin reservations increased 35%. She said this underscores the value of state parks and the types of places MHAA supports through grants.

Ms. Marci Ross congratulated Ms. Settina on her national award and asked her to say a few words about the award and how it came about.

Ms. Settina thanked Ms. Ross and said she is a member of the National Association of State Park Directors and that her colleagues selected her this year for the “Distinguished Service Award.” She expressed her gratitude for the award.

Other MHAA members offered their congratulations to Ms. Settina.

Mr. Clark announced that the National Park Service has released a report that he authored on Algonquin migration. A link will be circulated to download the 350-page report.

Ms. Janice Hayes-Williams announced that Senate Bill 142 is being proposed and would establish Maryland Emancipation Day. The bill is being sponsored by Senator Ellis of Charles County.

Mr. Spedden shared that for the last two consecutive weeks, hotel occupancy and revenue for Washington County have exceeded 2019 levels. He said he was cautiously optimistic when looking at this uptick.

ADJOURN

Mr. McCord thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting and for their dedication to MHAA. He thanked members for helping to bring history to life, noting how much this can enrich Marylanders' lives in the present and into the future.

Mr. McCord adjourned the meeting 11:55 am.